

on for nearly a half dozen years. I'm glad that it will provide important tools for airport recycling going forward.

I commend my colleagues for moving this legislation forward as a positive step for the country and for my home State.

FLOOD PROTECTION

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for their help in passing S. 2039 by unanimous consent last month. This bill, which establishes a pilot program in North Dakota, will provide a great deal of help to citizens in my State.

I sponsored this legislation because Federal policy has stood in the way of flood protection measures necessary for communities in North Dakota. I want to highlight a couple of situations, one in Fargo and one in Minot, that illustrate the need for this bill.

First, Fargo, ND, has faced repeated flooding in the Red River, which runs through the heart of the city. The city has constructed a permanent levee to run along as much of the river as possible. However, over the years, some properties along the river bank were bought out using funds from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. HMGP guidelines prohibit the construction of any structure, including a levee, on land bought out under the program. So as a result, Fargo's levee stops every time it comes up to HMGP land. When the waters rise, the city builds a temporary extension of its levee that goes over the HMGP land and connects to the next section of the permanent levee, and when the waters recede, the city has to take down the temporary levee to remain in compliance with the HMGP no-construction policy. Year after year, Fargo has constructed and then removed several temporary levees at great expense and for no apparent reason other than the letter of the HMGP law.

Second, Minot, ND, is about to run into the same problem currently facing Fargo. As my colleagues know, Minot faced enormous flooding during the summer of 2011, losing thousands of homes and sustaining hundreds of millions in damages. In response, the city plans to build a major new flood protection system, including levees through the middle of town along the river. In order to build that system, Minot will have to buy out dozens of properties and create space for a levee. The Federal Government will make money available through the HMGP program for property buyouts, but we are unable to use it if spending it precludes construction of a levee on these properties.

In both cases, the solution is simply to permit levee construction on property purchased with HMGP funds. HMGP restrictions on construction were intended to ensure that the Federal Government would not be on the hook to pay for future flood damages

on property it had bought out. For the most part, that makes sense. But when a community wants to add flood protection in the form of a levee, it should be allowed to do so. A levee across HMGP-purchased land does not create future liabilities for the Federal Government; instead, it increases flood protection for local residents—something that will save the government money in future flood situations.

The text of S. 2039 allows for levee construction on North Dakota land purchased through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The legislation directs the FEMA Administrator to approve construction of a levee on HMGP land after the Administrator determines that the levee would provide better flood risk mitigation than maintaining the property as open space. The Administrator is also directed to ensure that the levee would comply with relevant levee construction and maintenance standards and would minimize future costs to the Federal Government.

And I would like to put particular emphasis on the subject of costs to the Federal Government. This legislation does not affect the amounts of money provided under the HMGP program. It does, however, allow communities like Minot to use HMGP dollars more efficiently by permitting property buyouts to be linked with new flood protection plans. The legislation eliminates the costs FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers incur every time they are forced to build and then tear down temporary levees on HMGP properties. Finally, the legislation ensures that any costs associated with the process the FEMA Administrator and the Army Corps Chief of Engineers use to approve levee construction are borne by the State, local, or tribal government requesting the levee. Any Federal funds approved elsewhere of course remain available for levee construction and are not affected by this legislation.

S. 2039 has moved on to the House of Representatives where I hope it can be approved expeditiously and sent to the President. The bill will provide important benefits to the people of Fargo, Minot, Devils Lake, and other North Dakota communities facing repeated flood risks. I thank my colleagues for their support of this common sense legislation, and I hope it can be an example of how to improve flood protection nationwide.

REMEMBERING FOUR CHAPLAINS OF THE USAT "DORCHESTER"

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to four American heroes who embody the spirit of what it means to serve your fellow man. Those heroes are the four Army chaplains who served on board the United States Transport Ship *Dorchester* in 1943—Methodist Minister Reverend George L. Fox, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Roman Catholic Priest John P. Washington, and Reformed

Church in America minister Reverend Clark V. Poling.

On February 2, 1943, the *Dorchester* was making its way across the North Atlantic, carrying 904 service men, merchant seamen, and civilian workers. This area was under constant patrol by German submarines; it was a dangerous area for American vessels and several ships had already been sunk between Newfoundland and Greenland, the *Dorchester's* intended destination. At 12:55 a.m. on February 3, a German U-boat spotted the *Dorchester* and fired 3 torpedoes at the American ship, delivering a fatal blow.

The *Dorchester* began to take on water and would sink beneath the freezing ocean in under 25 minutes. Many had been killed or injured in the initial blast, and panic set in as the passengers and crew attempted to find life vests and get into lifeboats. Many of the surviving passengers recall the calm disposition of the four chaplains who made their way to a storage locker and handed out lifejackets. When there were no more lifejackets, the chaplains removed their own and gave them to four passengers who were without. Rabbi Goode was seen giving away his only pair of gloves, and throughout the chaos and panic survivors could hear the chaplains preaching courage as the ship went down.

There were not enough rubber suits onboard to protect the passengers from the frigid North Atlantic waters. Of the 14 lifeboats aboard, only 2 were successfully used in abandoning ship. Of the 904 passengers, only 229 were saved by nearby vessels. 14 bodies were recovered, and 661, including the 4 Army chaplains, were missing and unreported.

In recognition of the extraordinary heroism displayed by the chaplains when they sacrificed their lives by giving up their life preservers to other men aboard the *Dorchester*, Congress authorized the Special Medal for Heroism which was awarded by President Eisenhower on January 18, 1961. No such medal has been awarded again in our Nation's history.

Millions of men and women have served bravely in our military. Many, like the chaplains onboard the *Dorchester*, have gone above and beyond the call of duty. The 4 chaplains on board, despite their differences in faith, came together to bring comfort to the 904 men on board the *Dorchester*. And they proved that it is possible to serve not only their country and their God but also their fellow man.

On February 14, a monument to the four chaplains of the *Dorchester* will be unveiled in Sebastian, FL. In January, I had a chance to meet Ernie Heaton, the last living survivor of the *Dorchester* sinking and a key leader in the push to get a monument put up in Sebastian. It was clear after meeting Ernie that witnessing the four chaplains' sacrifice first-hand made a lasting impact on him, just as their story continues to inspire all of us.